assistance to SSI units in all types of industries including the match industry and the brick industry under several schemes, including the Composite Loan Scheme and the National Equity Fund Scheme, both of which are specifically designed for financing artisans and tiny industries in the rural and semi urban areas.

(d) IDBI has reported that as part of its promotional activities it continues to extend financial assistance for the promotion of rural industries in different States, including Tamil Nadu. IDBI has been assisting and encouraging the promotion of entrepreneurship development in rural areas by supporting rural entrepreneurship development programmes which are specially focussed on helping rural persons to set up small & tiny units. IDBI is also selectively assisting voluntary agencies in their activities to provide self and wage employment in the industrial sector, particularly to rural areas.

IL-76 Aircraft

5202. SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state·

(a) whether the IL-76 aircraft have been found to be suitable for operation in Indian conditions;

(b) if not, whether any modifications are being carried out in the aircraft.

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the number of such aircraft grounded so far due to engine trouble?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

(d) Three aircraft have been grounded due to engine trouble.

Soil Testing Laboratories of Rubber Board in Kerala

5203. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to start new soil testing laboratories attached to the Regional Offices of Rubber Board in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of such soil testing laboratories in existence at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) (a) to (c). At present, there are nine soil testing laboratories in existence all over the country. A tenth soil testing laboratory is under the process of establishment at Mangalore in Karnataka. There is no proposal to start any more soil testing laboratories at present.

Passenger Shipping services from Nagapattinam to Singapore

5204. DR. (SHRIMATI) PADMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to restore the passenger shipping services from Nagapattinam to Singapore;

(b) if so, when; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c). A decision has been taken by the Government